

THE CHAPLAIN AND BRAINWASHING

CHAPLAIN (CAPT) LEONARD J. PAZNONSKAS

(60-1)
(May 1960)

26

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE-----	1
CHAPTER	
<u>I</u> BRAINWASHING DESCRIBED	3
Techniques.....	8
<u>II</u> WHAT THE CHAPLAIN CAN DO.....	11
<u>III</u> RED ARMY "CHAPLAINS".....	12
<u>IV</u> THE CODE OF CONDUCT	16
<u>V</u> EPILOGUE.....	17
<u>VI</u> GLOSSARY.....	18
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	20

PREFACE

A week after the signing of the armistice in Korea, I was transferred from the 19th Combat Engineer Group operating in the X Corps area, to the United Nations Command, Military Armistice Commission Support Group, based at Munsan-ni. In this latter assignment it was my great privilege to be a small part of Operation Big Switch. Together with chaplains of other faiths, I was on hand at the huge corrugated tin building known as Freedom Village to welcome our men returning from Red prison camps. I was a bit player in a drama highly charged with emotion, wherein the leading characters were drinking in their first taste of freedom after almost three years in Hell.

Subsequent experience revealed that while I was an eye witness to one of the great moments in contemporary history, I did not see the forest for the trees. Together with most Americans, I did not learn, until several years later, what the aforementioned Hell was like, through which some of our men passed heroically, others ignominiously, still others, fatally.

Four years later, while attending the Company Grade Officers' course at the Chaplain School, I was exposed to a taped speech delivered at the School by Major William E. Mayer, an Army psychiatrist who had been intimately involved in a study of our returned POWs and their experience while in Communist hands. Major Mayer's talk was my introduction to the Red technique now known variously as "menticide", or the murder of the mind (Meerloo), or more commonly, "brainwashing".

As a clergyman, I have long been of the opinion that atheistic

Communism is in a very literal sense inspired and sustained by the Devil, the Prince of Darkness; subsequent research in the field of brainwashing has further confirmed this opinion.

We chaplains, as experts in the field of spiritual combat, know that the devil operates most effectively in the shadows; he manipulates and ensnares his victims most successfully if they are unaware of his existence, or of the fact that they are being manipulated by him. This is the very same modus operandi employed so successfully world-wide by the devil's militant advocates, the Communists, to bring about the subjection of the free peoples of the world. Brainwashing is but one of the many techniques they employ in this to-the-death struggle to impose their will upon us. As men of God laboring in the military apostolate, we can best serve the cause of freedom by exposing Communism and its techniques to the light of day, employing every means at our command.

BRAINWASHING DESCRIBED

In Executive Order 10631 promulgating the Code of Conduct, President Eisenhower stated, "Every member of the Armed Forces of the United States is expected to measure up to the standards embodied in this Code of Conduct while he is in combat or in captivity. To ensure achievement of these standards, each member of the Armed Forces liable to capture shall be provided with specific training and instruction designed to better equip him to counter and withstand all enemy efforts against him, and shall be fully instructed as to the behavior and obligations expected of him during combat or captivity".

Standing on the threshold of the Space Age, the Free World gazes uneasily at the Sword of Damocles suspended over it in the avowed Communist intention to dominate the world. Even as our statesmen gather at Geneva to discuss disarmament, the world is involved in a race to produce more and bigger missiles, with our Jeremias loudly proclaiming that the Russians are fast outstripping us in every field. Realistically, our Armed Forces are revising their organization and tactics in preparation for World War III, an atomic war which may literally be the War to end all wars, by destroying the world.

We chaplains, more so than others, must be aware that the arms race is but one phase of the conflict in which the world is already involved; that we are engaged to the death in a war of ideologies, the Godly versus the Godless, Spirit versus Matter. Since this is in the field of our professional specialty, we must exert ourselves to the utmost not merely to defend freedom in the world; our vocation as ministers of God provides us with the means to defeat the enemy with weapons of the spirit.

For the purposes of this paper we will limit ourselves to one facet of the present conflict, brainwashing, and what we as chaplains can, and must, do about it.

Brainwashing is the total psychological weapon by means of which, together with its armed might, Soviet Russia firmly expects to conquer the world.(1) The Russians have been using this weapon for thirty years as a most effective means of imposing their will upon the people within their sphere of influence, but have managed to keep it such a well guarded secret that we in America became aware of it only following the Korean conflict. There in Korea we Americans met our enemy, totalitarian Communism, for the first time. When our contact was on the battlefield, our men more than held their own, but when we met the enemy on a personal basis, face to face in his prison camps, in many cases we not only failed to hold our own, but failed ignominiously. Here our men were subjected for the first time to a weapon, or a type of warfare that was entirely new to them, one they were completely unprepared to cope with. Communist indoctrination, or brainwashing, was effective in many cases because of its very novelty. "If I'd only known what it was all about, I could have withstood it better", was the attitude of many who succumbed to a greater or less degree, and consequently collaborated with the Communists while in prison.

In the light of events in Korea, our government issued the Code of Conduct, to try to mold a new set of fundamental attitudes in our fighting men with a view to helping them, and the nation itself, survive

(1) Eugene Kinhead, In Every War But One, N.Y., W. W. Norton, 1959 p.1

in any future war. Yet from personal observation over the period since the promulgation of the Code of Conduct, it seems to me that very little, or at least, not enough, is being done in the Army to teach our soldiers what brainwashing is and how to combat it. We chaplains can fill this vacuum by literally, truly becoming experts in this field through continuous study. We cannot expose brainwashing to our troops unless we know what it is ourselves.

The system of Communist indoctrination as an instrument for enslaving the minds of men owes its origin to the work of a Nobel Prize winning Russian scientist named Pavlov, who received the award for his theory of Conditioned Reflexes. Pavlov, experimenting with animals, discovered that by controlling a dog's environment, by subjecting him to certain stimuli over a period, he could be induced to respond in a certain way: fed a biscuit, the flow of saliva was stimulated. The feeding was then accompanied by the ringing of a bell for a time; eventually, the ringing of a bell without the biscuit still induced the flow of saliva.

Karl Marx, in his theory of dialectic materialism, believed that even as society is in a constant state of evolution which would reach perfection in Communism, so too would human nature evolve into the "New Soviet man", a robot-like creature without a mind or a will of his own, who existed only to carry out the will of the Party. Lenin realized that this would never happen naturally, that it was impossible to obtain the peoples' willing cooperation to be transformed into said Soviet Man. Pavlov's experiments showed him how it could be done. He told Pavlov he had "saved the revolution", that his findings guaranteed the future of world Communism.(2) Little did Pavlov, an honest scientist, dream that the Communists would apply his discoveries to people in order

(2) Edward Hunter, Brainwashing, N.Y., Farrar, Straus & Gudahy, 1956, p.40

to subjugate them completely.

Eventually a pattern evolved, and the reason for the existence of an Iron Curtain ceased to be a mystery; the Curtain was an effort to create a controlled environment within which the subjects of Communism were to be remade into the Soviet man. Travel, restrictions, the jamming of Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America were but part of the overall effort to exclude all alien, non-Communist influences. The people were, and are, subjected to an overwhelming diet of indoctrination in Marxist-Leninist principles. The theory is that a person who remains in this environment and is subjected to Communist "stimuli" long enough will eventually be completely remade in the image of the Party, without a mind or will of his own.

Father Eleutherius Winance, O.S.B., a Belgian missionary expelled from China in 1952, graphically writes in his book, The Communist Persuasion, the wholesale indoctrination (HSIO-HSI) to which the Chinese are subjected:

No one escapes HSIO-HSI. The old man, the youth, the humble woman of the people, the old lady aristocrat, the lawyer, the professor, the doctor, the soldier, and especially the Party official--all have to submit to it. How often -- did I pass long lines of indoctrination candidates walking in step three abreast, all carrying their little wooden stools, on their way to the HSIO-HSI meeting under the watchful eye of the political police. --HSIO-HSI absorbs the best and the most of the people's activity. Throughout the year thorough and clever organization of HSIO-HSI groups relentlessly fashions people's thinking -- little by little a slow transformation of minds took place. By dint of hearing the same slogans repeated again and again, one became intellectually less demanding---acquiesced to what had been proposed.

This was the environment and mentality with which our soldiers were confronted for the first time, in north Korean prison camps. Those who survived the death marches to the camps, arrived full of apprehension of the treatment now confronting them. Fully expecting to be beaten and tortured, they were often instead greeted by a smiling Communist officer who welcomed them to the camp - in excellent English - and assured them that they would not be considered as enemy soldiers, but rather simply as dupes of the Wall Street warmongers. Instead of being forced to work, they would instead be regarded as students; their "friends" the Communists would teach them what the war was all about, what Communism was all about, and asked simply that they remain "openminded", and perhaps eventually join their "friends" in "fighting for peace".

This was their introduction to indoctrination. It was to be expected that in the main, the Communists encountered resistance to their efforts at indoctrination, but with the benefit of Soviet experience at their disposal, they felt themselves capable of overcoming any and all opposition, they would use "scientific" methods to insure compliance with their will.

In effect, the Red POW camps were nothing more than large clinical laboratories where our men were dealt with as patients and mental cases. The "cure" was made when people's minds were changed. The objective was again, to alter their natures, to produce robots endowed only with instincts. The Reds used the highly specialized knowledge of medical science to take balanced minds and make them unbalanced. "The methods devised by the free world to combat mental illness were used by the Communists to create it.(3)

TECHNIQUES

Indoctrination, to succeed, required primarily that the prisoner's will be destroyed, and that his mind be clouded over, drained of all previous loyalties, convictions and ideals. This was the soil in which Communist ideology was to be planted; these were conditions necessary for the complete enslavement of the "patient".

Various tools and techniques were employed to bring about the necessary conditioning. First there was hunger. "I was always hungry", seemed to be a universal complaint among most of the returned prisoners. Diet deficiencies were carefully created by diet specialists whose job it was to keep the prisoners' meals scientifically unbalanced. The amounts of food ladled out were adjusted to the effect desired, without any relation to available supplies. Thus, a man reduced to the point of starvation, and an extra spoonful of cabbage induced feelings of gratitude towards the "benefactor" who was responsible for his starvation! Those who collaborated were rewarded with a little extra, those who resisted got less.

Fatigue was another chronic condition under brainwashing. Like hunger, fatigue was scientifically calculated and subtly applied - Athletic types were permitted to wear themselves out, but afterwards instead of resting, they must attend hours and hours of compulsory classes and discussion meetings, study for additional hours, perform other required duties, with little time for relaxation. Profound fatigue can crack the finest mind, as the Hungarian Reds discovered with Cardinal Mindszenty. An individual deprived of sleep is more amenable to suggestion.

He is more apt to carry out the demands of those who would like to have him undertake certain specific behavior, and is less likely to resist the demands of those in authority. When the mind is befogged, a person can be seduced into accepting what would otherwise be abhorrent to him -.

Tension, uncertainty, frustration, hopelessness are also artificially induced to further the process of mental deterioration. Vague accusations, threats, are aroused by a captor who gives a semblance of omniscience. A careful manipulation of mail, withholding the cheerful letters, passing on the "Dear Johns", induce a resentment, a turning away from family. A system of informers further divided the prisoner from his fellows - he couldn't trust anyone - "anyone except us; come to us, we are your friends", was the Red pitch.

Discussion and self criticism are also part of the system, the more a prisoner could be induced to talk, about anything, the more vulnerable he became. Through "self-criticism" he revealed foibles and faults which the Reds exploited to the utmost to bring about subjection.

Confession plays a very important part in the system of indoctrination. Something intrinsic in Communism seems to make confession indispensable to it. Many of our airmen were tortured to extract confessions of germ warfare. Others wondered at the great lengths the Communists went to persuade confession to crimes both captor and captive knew were ridiculous. To the Reds, confession was synonymous with submission.

In brief, the whole system of indoctrination is a series of pressures -- isolation, interrogation, repetitive assertions

by teams of psychological workers, fatigue malnutrition, exhaustion, auto suggestion, and finally the emergence of obsessions, hysterical states and delusion states in which confessions are freely given and the subject can no longer distinguish fact from fancy nor properly recall his past fund of knowledge. In such a state, having now been thoroughly "cleansed" of his "bourgeois mentality", the intellectual vacuum is now ready to be filled with communist doctrine; the subject's transformation into the "Soviet Man" is now completed. In the case of Americans in the Korean POW camps, this meant that having received the treatment, they were now ready to do the bidding of their new masters, by lending themselves to enemy propaganda, trying to encourage other Americans to embrace Communism, informing on the "reactionaries", in a word, giving all manner of aid and comfort to the enemy. We chaplains must do everything possible to insure that this does not happen again.

WHAT THE CHAPLAIN CAN DO

According to Major Mayer, the Chinese communists had a very poor conception of the American soldier as an individual. They saw him as having weak loyalties, whether to his family, his country, his religion or to his fellow soldiers. His concepts of right and wrong were often hazy, he was an opportunist who would sell his soul, if the price was right. He is ignorant - of social values, tensions and conflicts, has little understanding of American history and philosophy, of civil rights, freedoms, safeguards. He is exceedingly insular and provincial with little or no idea of the problems and aims of what he disdainfully describes as "foreigners" and their countries. He fails to understand or appreciate the meaning of, and necessity for, military organization and discipline, his Army's traditions, mission and objectives. He often feels that his military service is a kind of hateful, unavoidable servitude to be tolerated briefly and then escaped from; he resents hardship and sacrifice of any description, as if these were unreasonable and unfair to him personally.(4)

An unflattering picture indeed, yet unfortunately containing enough truth I think to cause some soul-searching on our part, for here is a catalogue of failings that can in turn be attributed to failure on the part of family, school and church. We chaplains may well use this character delineation as a point of departure, employing the pulpit, the Character Guidance podium and the counselling chamber to impart to our soldiers the training in character which may prove more essential to survival in a future war than skill at arms.

(4) "Why Did Many GI Captives Cave In?" US News and World Report, February 24, 1956

RED ARMY "CHAPLAINS"

A glance at our opposite number in the Soviet Army, the zampolit, or political officer, can perhaps help us to appreciate our own roll in the present scheme of things. According to DA PAM 30-50-1, political officers are attached to all units of the Red Army down to battalion and probably company level. Infantry and artillery troops receive 64 hours of political indoctrination during their winter training period, which may last from four to five months. These officers are devoted Communists who are charged with the responsibility of creating the proper mental attitude in the mind of the Soviet soldier. Such propagandizing is achieved through complete control over what the soldier reads, hears and sees. Political indoctrination periods are used for disseminating anti-West propaganda, for the discussions of such themes as the history of the Communist Party and the Stalin Constitution, and for readings from Marx, Lenin and Engels. In addition to this formal political indoctrination, the Soviet soldier is expected to spend about two hours every evening (during training) in study and Party political work.

How zealously and assiduously the Communists work to create the "Soviet Man" - type soldier, atheistic, hating everything which is not Communistic, ourselves in particular. And it is the work of our counterpart to foster this spirit, which gives the Soviet soldier a sense of mission - to "rescue" the world from the "evils" of capitalism!

Contrast our own position. Our Army is authorized one Chaplain per thousand men, roughly speaking. Our trainees receive four hours of Character Guidance instruction during basic training, one hour per month thereafter (versus the 64 hours plus two hours daily in the Red Army!). We may, or may not, have additional opportunity to influence the thinking of our soldiers during weekly religious services -- provided they feel inclined to attend.

In the face of such odds, it behooves us Chaplains to exert every possible effort to make an impact on the thinking of our soldiers, to keep alive in them the spiritual heritage that has been our country's strength in the past. No stone must be left unturned to encourage participation in worship; those who will have none of this may still be moved by well prepared Character Guidance instruction. Still others may be influenced in our offices, at the training areas, wherever we can find them; find them we must, for time may be running out.

"Character Guidance" has unfortunately become a term of approbrium all too often among chaplains as well as soldiers, because of a lack of proper motivation on the part of both. When a chaplain fails to appreciate the opportunities for good inherent in the Character Guidance program, especially in the instructional phase of it, his attitude is easily discernable to the men. I submit that we can capitalize in this field by presenting our instructions on patriotism, loyalty, honesty, self-discipline and allied topics not as mere abstractions which they may freely accept or reject, but as weapons essential for survival in the event of another war.

Experience in Korean POW camps revealed that the Reds quickly spotted in these weaknesses of character so many Achilles Heels through which they were able to attack and destroy. The same experience has likewise shown that where the proper traits of character were predominant, men withstood Communist indoctrination and returned from captivity with honor.

In our counselling sessions, particularly in training centers, where the newly inducted soldier finds the transition from civilian to military life extremely painful, we have all encountered the many complaints about harsh discipline, bad food, rigorous training. Here again, the wise counsellor should try to win acceptance of these situation in the light of possible survival in the event of war. "A lot of soldiers gripe about Army chow. They sneak off to the PX and stuff themselves with hot dogs and soft drinks. This is a bad habit. I know men who were trained that way who didn't come back because of it. A man should learn to eat what he gets. The food (in prison) was sorry, but it would keep you alive if you ate it".(5)

It is unfortunate that many of our soldiers had to pass through the crucible of fire and prison to learn the value of self discipline, loyalty, virtues little esteemed by today's youth, forlack of which many died, needlessly. The Chaplain who lends an ear to such gripes without imparting salutary instruction on such occasions, is remiss in his duty.

How often have we presented the necessity of religion, of a strong personal faith, again as a means of survival? Testimony of returned prisoners reveals that those elements which gave a man

(5) Lloyd W. Pate, Reactionary!, NY, Harper Bros., 1955, p. 128

moral strength were just as essential and definable as those that imparted physical strength were just as essential and definable as those that imparted physical strength. "No matter how much the Reds insisted I was wholly abandoned, I was able to demolish their whole argument by prayer. I heard of no case where anyone without convictions was able to resist brainwashing effectively once the Communists applied the heat". (6)

Evidence proved that strong convictions-- in a way of life, in a personal code of conduct steadfastly adhered to, puts up roadblocks to mind attack. The code could be religious, political, social, ethical, patriotic. The secret was knowing what one believed in, and why.

(6) Hunter, op. cit., p.269

THE CODE OF CONDUCT

It is my conviction that the Code of Conduct should be placed next to the Bible as a rich source of material both for sermons and instructions by which every chaplain can contribute immeasurably to the preservation of our nation, through strengthening the individual soldier. We promote the spirit of the Code by reminding men whenever possible that they do not cease to be soldiers, that the war does not end when they are captured; that the courage and discipline they maintained under fire is even more necessary in prison; that any deviation from the Code in prison is as deplorable as on the battlefield.

The aim of the Red captors in Korea was to make the prisoners serve the cause of international Communism. Many of our soldiers yielded, and furthered this purpose. No matter how they rationalized, they knew this was wrong; they knew it betrayed their better nature, and violated the ideals in which they were reared. Those who permitted themselves to be indoctrinated realized that they were to some degree betraying their country, and even lost the respect of the enemy. In the face of such abjection, many of the Chinese said they were ashamed to admit they had fought alongside the Americans in World War II. "If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available". (Article III)

EPILOGUE

I realize that in the foregoing pages I have but skimmed the surface of the subject of Brainwashing. The research entailed in the writing of these pages proved grimly fascinating. My intention, or hope, in writing on the subject is to arouse the interest of fellow chaplains in what I deem to be a topic of very serious moment, to encourage them to arm themselves with a deeper knowledge of Communism and its methods for the sake of survival.

The Reds do not differentiate in their ideology between peace and war; they recognize only Communism and the enemy, which means -- everyone who is not a communist. They are engaged in what they teach is a death struggle between communism and all other systems. They believe this conflict can be waged anywhere, at any time, under any guise, that anything which weakens or destroys non communists or anti-communists is a legitimate weapon. Our own best weapon of defense, is a thorough knowledge of Communism and Communist tactics, and as chaplains, we must spread that knowledge far and wide.

GLOSSARY

Sergeant Lloyd W. Pate was an American soldier captured in Korea who endured almost three years of hell in a North Korean prison. He survived with honor, and upon his return wrote a book about his experiences, Reactionary!, was quoted in this paper - I draw upon Sergeant Pete's book to present in his words a brief, but essential, glossary of terms.

- Brainwashing - "Any soldier captured by the Communists can expect to undergo a period of brainwashing, which is just a new word for an old trick - to get a man to turn traitor against his country" p. 132
- Code of Conduct - "I agree with every word of it, especially the part about not telling the enemy a damn thing except your name, age, rank and serial number". p. 139
- collaboration - "The Reds dream up some idea and try to push it over. It is very important to them to get men men to participate, to do something, no matter how small - sign peace petition, write articles. Once a man does that small favor for them, they've got him where they want him". p. 134
- criticism meetings - "At first you're supposed to criticize yourself. Later they insist you criticize or

inform on other men. Gradually they try to set men against one another. These criticism meetings can get a lot of rats started". p. 135

Give up-itis

- "One look at the camp, and half of them lost the will to live". p. 53

progressives

- "Those who cooperated with the Chinese, agreed with everything. It seemed to me they had been protected all their lives, always had someone to run to, and now the Chinese were their guardians". p. 66.

reactionaries

- "were strictly against the Chinese and anything they said or did. I was a reactionary because I was stubborn. I didn't like a guy to stand over me and preach things I knew were a pack of lies. I'm an American. I'm proud of it and didn't like a Chink to tell me my government and my people were no damn good. I was still an American soldier and it was my duty to harass those bastards as much as possible". p. 66

BIBLIOGRAPHY
BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS

- Dean, William F. (Major General). General Dean's Story. N.Y.,
Viking Press, 1954
- Hunter, Edward. Brainwashing, N.Y., Farrar, Straus
& Gudahy, 1956
- Hunter, Edward. Brainwashing in Red China.
- Kinthead, Eugene. In Every War But One. N.Y.,
W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1959
- Kovago, Jozef. You Are All Alone. N.Y., Praeger,
1959
- Meerlo, Joost A.M. The Rape of the Mind. N.Y., World
Publishing Co., 1956
- Tonne, Arthur. The Story of Chaplain Kapaun.
Emporia, Kansas, Dide Publishers 1954
- Winance, Eleutherius. The Communist Persuasion. NY
P. J. Kennedy & Sons 1958
- White, William L. The Captives of Korea; An Unofficial
White Paper. N.Y., Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1957
- Handbook on the Soviet Army. Department of the Army. DA PAM 30-50-1
July 1958
- The U. S. Fighting Man's Code Department of Defense. DA PAM 21-7,
6 August 1959